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MARCOS REASSURES LAXALT ON REBELS

Tells Senator the Communist Campaign Is Under Control — Gets Reagan Note

By SETH MYDANS
Special to The New York Times

MANILA, Oct. 16 — President Ferdinand E. Marcos met for an hour today with Senator Paul Laxalt, a personal envoy from President Reagan, and assured him that the Philippines had its growing Communist insurgency under control, a palace spokesman said.

The spokesman, Adrian Cristobal, said Senator Laxalt, a conservative Republican from Nevada, brought a note from the President asking Mr. Marcos for a frank assessment of his Government's stability.

He denied that the note contained a warning about his country's future, as some sources in Washington had said. Senator Laxalt declined to talk to reporters after the meeting, and the American Embassy offered no comment except to confirm that the meeting had taken place.

Mr. Cristobal, who said he talked with Mr. Marcos after the meeting in Malacanang Palace, said he did not have details of what Mr. Laxalt told the Philippine President.

'Consider the Record'

"He was carrying a note asking that the President have a frank, candid, intimate dialogue with Senator Laxalt," Mr. Cristobal said. "So the President spoke candidly with him. The President told Senator Laxalt to consider the record."

Mr. Cristobal added, "We were not overrun by two previous insurgencies, and we will not be overrun by this one."

He referred to the defeat in the 1950's of the Moscow-oriented Huk rebellion and of the Moslem Moro National Liberation Front in the 1970's.

The Philippine Government acknowledges that the Communist New People's Army has been growing and estimates its strength now at 12,000 fighters. But Mr. Marcos has said Government forces have turned the tide against the rebels.

U.S. Less Optimistic

The assessments of the United States State Department and intelligence agencies, however, are less optimistic. They warn that the growing insurgency poses an increasing threat to national stability.

The American Ambassador, Stephen W. Bosworth, said last week that the Communist rebellion "is widespread, better organized and even more committed than previous insurgencies."

Mr. Cristobal said he believed that Mr. Laxalt's visit had grown out of a distorted picture in Washington of the Philippine situation. He said Mr. Reagan "has not been getting the whole picture of what is going on." Mr. Marcos, he said, "knows what is going on better than all those kibitzers."

Administration sources in Washington said Monday that Senator Laxalt was carrying a message from Mr. Reagan to "express his concern" about the growing insurgency and the widespread corruption and economic decline that are feeding it.

Manila Seems Embarrassed

Officially, the State Department and the embassy here have said only that Senator Laxalt, as a close friend of Mr. Reagan, would meet with Mr. Marcos while in Manila. The Senator was due to leave Thursday. The publicity attending the visit has appeared to embarrass the Philippine Government, which has not given it the public prominence it usually accords to official American contacts.

The presidential press office issued no statement about the visit, and spokesmen denied that a meeting with the American visitor was on Mr. Marcos's schedule today.

Mr. Cristobal, who acts as a spokesman for the President, is not connected with his press office. The Government-controlled television stations have not mentioned the visit, and only three of the six major newspapers mentioned it today.

One of these, The Metro Manila Times, published an article this morning with the headline, "Another Meddler From U.S. Arrives." But the text of this and the other articles simply quoted reports of the visit that have been published in the United States.

An embassy spokesman, Allan Croghan, said Senator Laxalt had no plans to meet with members of the political opposition, as American officials often do when they come to assess the situation. Mr. Croghan said the Senator came solely as Mr. Reagan's envoy to the Philippine President.

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